

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASTDC PRIORITY 925
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: LEVESQUE STRESSES POSSIBILITY OF RENEWED CANADIAN TIES

REF: QUEBEC 0104

1. IN A SUNDAY INTERVIEW WITH THE INDEPENDENT FRENCH NETWORK TVA,
PREMIER LEGESQUE STATED THAT QUEBEC INDEPENDENCE NEED NOT BRING
ABOUT BREAK UP OF CANADA AND THAT IT COULD LEAD TO RENEWAL OF
TIES BINDING COUNTRY TOGETHER. PREMIER SAID HE WAS IN BASIC
AGREEMENT WITH MINISTER OF STATE BERNACD LANDRY AND PQ BACKBENCHER
GERALD GODIN WHO HAVE SAID THAT SEPARATION WAS NOT GOAL IN
ITSELF BUT MEANS FOR ACHIEVING QUEBEC SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC GOALS AND,
AS SUCH, SEPARATION MAY NOT BE NECESSARY. PREMIER STRESSED
THAT POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY FOR QUEBEC--THE RIGHT TO GOVERN SELF

FREELY--NEVER MEANT THE BREAK-UP OF CANADA. IN LEVESQUE'S
VIEW, PQ HAS ALWAYS TALKED ABOUT ASSOCIATION. "THERE IS NO REASON
WHY WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED A RENEWAL OF CANADIAN STRUCTURES WOULD NOT,
AT ONCE, AID CAUSE OF HEALTHY CANADA AND LIBERTY OF QUEBEC."
HE CONCLUDED THAT THERE WERE MANY IN QUEBEC WHO WANT
TO REAMIN IN CONFEDERATION.

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WM COMMENT: WHILE LEVESQUE IS CORRECT IN STATING THAT ASSOCIATION
HAS ALWAYS BEEN VITAL ASPECT OF PQ INDEPENDENCE PROPOSITION, HIS
TV INTERVIEW APPEARS TO CONFIRM THE SUSPICIONS OF MANY THAT THERE HAS
BEEN A DELIBERATE SHIFT OF EMPHASIS IN RECENT WEEKS AWAY FROM WORD
INDEPENDENCE TO WORD ASSOCIATION. INTERVIEW ALSO CONFIRMS THAT
CHANGE IN PRESPECTIVE INITIATED BY REMARKS MADE BY GODIN AND

LANDRY AND GIVEN EMPHASIS BY LEVESQUE'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS PROJECTION
THAT QUEBEC WOULD EVENTUALLY VOTE IN A REFERENDUM PROPOSING A NEW TYPE
OF ASSOCIATION WITH CANADA IS MORE THAN A MERE WORD GAME. IT APPEARS
TO MEAN THAT NATIONAL ISSUE IS NOT AS CUT AND DRIED AS IT IS
OFTEN PERCEIVED TO BE AND THAT QUEBECERS MIGHT NOT BE VOTING
ON INDEPENDENCE SO MUCH AS A NEW FORM OF FEDERALISM IN REFERENDUM.

3. LEVESQUE IS CONSISTENT IN THAT HE HAS USED SOVEREIGNTY-
ASSOCIATION THESIS SINCE 1967 BUT HAS BEEN INCONSISTENT IN HIS EMPHASIS
ON THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF THIS PHRASE, JUGGLING THEM AS NECESSARY
TO INCREASE BASE OF SUPPORT WHILE PLACATING MILITANTS.
AS WE COMMENTED REFTTEL, THESE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS SEEM TO BE A
SIGNIFICANT SIGNALLING OF WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE IN, OR AT
LEAST DEPOLARIZE, THE TRUDEAU-LEVESQUE DEBATE. AS UN LEADER RODRIGUE
BIRON HAS SUGGESTED, THESE CHANGES COULD ALSO REPRESENT EFFORT
PUT VEXING CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION IN BACKGROUND IN ORDER GET
ON WITH REVIVING ECONOMY. UNUSUAL INSISTENCE ON FACT PQ PROGRAM
INCLUDES IDEA OF ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION WITH CANADA COULD ALSO
BE DESIGNED OFFSET STRESS ON INDEPENDENCE IN NEW YORK SPEECH.
WHATEVER THE BACKGROUND--SPECULATION WILL BE RIFE FOR SOME TIME--
LEVESQUE'S STATEMENTS IN TVA INTERVIEW HAVE MOVED HIM RATHER
FAR AWAY FROM RADICALS IN HIS PARTY WHO PREFER STRESS ON INDEPENDENCE
RATHER THAN ASSOCIATION. UNLESS HE IS DEFINITELY ENGAGED
IN EFFORT TO REDUCE INFLUENCE OF THIS ELEMENT IN PARTY NO
MATTER WHAT THE CONSEQUENCES, IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT HE WILL
SOON FEEL NEED TO MAKE SOME GESTURE TO APPEASE MILITANTS UNTIL
PARTY CONGRESS SCHEDULED FOR MAY.
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GARLAND

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Message Attributes

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